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JUL 06 2009

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of
Joseph P. ERRICO et al. :
Application No. 10/663,488 : DECISION ON PETITION
Filed: September 16, 2003 : UNDER 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3)
Attorney Docket No. SPINE 3.0-437PPPPPPP :
I C

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3), filed April 02, 2009, to accept an unintentionally delayed claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 for the benefit of priority to the prior-filed nonprovisional applications set forth in the amendment filed with the petition.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

A petition for acceptance of a claim for late priority under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) is only applicable to those applications filed on or after November 29, 2000. Further, the petition is appropriate only after the expiration of the period specified in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii). In addition, the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) must be accompanied by:

- (1) the reference required by 35 U.S.C. § 120 and 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(i) of the prior-filed application, unless previously submitted;
- (2) the surcharge set forth in § 1.17(t); and
- (3) a statement that the entire delay between the date the claim was due under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii) and the date the claim was filed was unintentional. The Director may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional.

The petition does not satisfy item (1) above.

The reference to add the above-noted, prior-filed applications in the first sentence of the specification on page one following the title is not acceptable as drafted since it improperly incorporates by reference the prior-filed applications. An incorporation

by reference statement added after an application's filing date is not effective because no new matter can be added to an application after its filing date (*see* 35 U.S.C. § 132(a)). If an incorporation by reference statement is included in an amendment to the specification to add a benefit claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 after the filing date of the application, the amendment would not be proper. When a benefit claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 is submitted after the filing of an application, the reference to the prior application cannot include an incorporation by reference statement of the prior application. *See Dart Industries v. Banner*, 636 F.2d 684, 207 USPQ 273 (C.A.D.C. 1980). *Note* MPEP §§ 201.06(c) and 608.04(b).

If reconsideration of this decision is desired, a renewed petition under 37 CFR § 1.78(a)(3) and an Application Data Sheet or an amendment (complying with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.121 and 37 CFR 1.76(b)(5)) to correct the above matters are required.

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

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Any questions concerning this matter may be directed to Michelle R. Eason at (571) 272-4231.



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